

Faith and Reason

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NO charge is made more frequently against the Church than that the Catholic Faith conflicts with Reason: that Faith not only has a tendency to discourage the activity of Reason in questions of religion, but shackles and represses it in every branch of knowledge. The Catholic believer, who accepts unquestioningly the whole deposit of Divine Revelation, who is prepared to accept "all the articles which the Holy Roman Catholic Church proposes, and may in future propose, to our belief," and who feels constrained to accept the teachings of his Faith as the ultimate standard of truth in all exercises of Reason, is surely not in a position to pursue seriously any scientific investigation whatsoever. Why should I, how can I, undertake wholeheartedly the study of history, biology, mental and moral science, of almost any science, except pure mathematics, while I am liable at any moment to be brought up against some teaching of the Church, and must control all my inferences and conclusions by the decisions of Church authority? What becomes of intellectual liberty under such conditions? And what promise can there be of intellectual progress, of the advance of science, when the pursuit of knowledge must be carried on, in constant fear of Church interference?

Now, we might find a sufficient answer to such questions in the history of medieval thought, and of the great centers of medieval learning, of universities like Oxford Paris, Bologna, Padua, Salamanca or Louvain. There was never a time when the Church exercised a greater influence on university life and studies, never a time when men's minds were more active in searching into and discussing both secular and religious problems, and never a time when men published more freely to the world the conclusions they had come to, and the theories they had built up. There is no sign that students or professors lived in fear of the Holy Inquisition, or were hindered in their work by any intrusion of its authority. But I prefer to appeal to this National University of Ireland itself. During all the years when there was question of satisfying in some measure the educational claims of Irish Catholics, we know how it was urged by many who were opposed to us that a university under Catholic control, in which there was a Catholic atmosphere, where the staff and undergraduates were in great majority Catholics, was condemned from its birth to be the home of obscurantism. It could never become a place of genuine learning; the Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church would bar the way to all honest intellectual activity, and to all true freedom of thought. It was only in a Protestant or atheistic institution that higher education could be carried forward to success.

They might have remembered, indeed, that great Belgian university, whose merits they have discovered and belauded, since its destruction fifteen months ago. Louvain, in modern times as in medieval, was a creation of the Church. It was informed with the Catholic spirit: it was instinct with Catholic life. The only non-aca-

democratic authority which it recognized was that of its founders, the Catholic Bishops. And yet it was among the foremost, if not itself quite the foremost, of the universities of Continental Europe. But they closed their eyes to all this, and asserted and reasserted that a university for Irish Catholics must, from the very nature of the Catholic Faith, be ever in a state of intellectual bondage, hampered and hindered in its search after truth. And so I think the most fitting reply in this place to the general charge that Faith must conflict with Reason, and that Catholic Church authority must repress all liberty of thought, is to be found in the experience of those who, like yourselves, have lived and worked in this National University, which is the heir to all the hopes and aims and principles and temper of the old Catholic University of Ireland. Is it your experience that a sincere and earnest assent to all the doctrines of the Faith is a hindrance to any of the studies for which you have entered the university? Is your belief in a spiritual and immortal soul an obstacle to first-class work in your school of medicine? Does the dogma of Papal Infallibility overshadow your study of history? Do the doctrines of the Real Presence and of Transubstantiation embarrass you, when busied in the laboratory with chemistry or physics? Or is it the case that the effect of firm religious beliefs upon the Catholic mind so dulls its edge and weakens its powers that it cannot keep pace in the intellectual advance with Atheism and Protestantism? Are the professors in this Catholic institution hampered in their teaching, or are its students held back in their studies, by the interference of Church authority or the dread of any such interference?

And we might confirm, if we would, your testimony

by an account of all that the Church has done for human learning, and by the long list of famous men who have been at the same time childlike believers in every doctrine of the Catholic Faith and leaders in every branch of human science. But there is no need; and we turn to the main question which is to engage our attention: Is there in reality any conflict between Reason and Faith.

By Faith we understand our firm intellectual assent to the whole body of Revealed Doctrines, on the authority of God revealing them; and by Reason the in-born natural faculty which apprehends truth and adheres to it, or, rather, the natural exercise of that faculty in apprehending and adhering to the truth. To ask, then, is there, can there be, a conflict between Reason and Faith, is to ask can any of the truths which man's natural intelligence lays hold upon with certainty, which are in fact what his mind represents them to be, contradict the doctrines or any of the doctrines, which he holds of Divine Faith? So stated, the question answers itself: truth cannot contradict truth; the truth as perceived by natural Reason cannot contradict the truth as revealed by God. Of course, there may at times be an appearance of contradiction. There are wide tracts of knowledge, in which both human science and Divine Revelation are concerned. The origin of man; the freedom of his will; the existence and immortality of his soul; the essential concept of nature, personality, substance; the history of the Jewish people and of Christ our Lord; the authenticity and historical value of the Old and New Testaments; the action of Pope Honorius in the Monothelite controversy; the case of Galileo and the Roman Inquisition; the source of civil authority; the morality of suicide; the indissolubility of the marriage

contract, these and countless similar matters are at once within the province of Reason and that of Faith. There can be no opposition, it is clear, between the findings of Reason and the doctrines of Faith, when Reason makes no mistake in its search for truth, and the doctrines of Faith are rightly understood. But Reason may err, and does err often; and doctrines may be held by individuals to be revealed, which are not contained in the Divine Deposit. It is not so long since it was proclaimed by many that geological discoveries had disproved the narrative of creation set forth in Genesis. Within the lifetime of our own generation it was widely asserted that the investigations of Mr. Darwin had achieved the same result. A little while ago we were stirred for a moment by the announcement that living matter had been produced by chemical process. We were told that the condemnation of Galileo refuted the theory of Papal Infallibility; that Determinism had set aside the doctrine of Free Will; that modern research on the ultimate constitution of matter overthrows the belief in Transubstantiation, in the Blessed Sacrament, and in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

In these, and in similar cases, if we could credit the enemies of Revealed Religion, the conclusions of science are in plain contradiction with the teachings of Faith; a man must make his choice between them; and, since he may not abdicate the use of Reason or repudiate the certainty which Reason offers him, he must simply give up the religious doctrines which he had held, and either accept some more rational form of belief, or embrace Agnosticism. And you meet with Christian apologists who endeavor to explain away the contradiction by setting Faith and Reason on different planes of thought:

they never intersect, never come into contact; no contradiction can arise between them. Or, they endow man with a dual personality: he is a scientific inquirer, and he is a simple-minded believer. His intellectual life is a double one, and without any interference of one life with the other: what he holds as a doctrine of his Faith he may and often must reject at the same time as scientifically untrue. And yet there is no real contradiction—as little, indeed, as between the “Pure Reason” and the “Practical Reason” of Kant; from whose theory both these explanations are derived.

We, too, hold that there can be no contradiction between Faith and Reason; but on very different grounds. Already at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Fifth Council of Lateran defined that “Since truth cannot contradict truth, every statement contrary to a truth of enlightened Faith must be wholly false.” And, in our own day, Pius IX, writes of a school of German philosophers that they “Never cease to extol the power and excellence of human Reason and to set it up against the Faith of Christ.” “Nothing can be conceived more foolish,” the Pope adds, “nothing more impious, nothing more opposed to Reason itself. For, although Faith be above Reason, no real dissension, no disagreement, can be ever found between them; since both proceed from one and the same source of eternal unchanging truth, God most great and most good.” And the Council of the Vatican, in the “Constitution on Catholic Faith,” after repeating the words of Pope Pius, that “there can be no real disaccord between Faith and Reason,” goes on to explain why it must be so. “It is the same God,” we read, “who reveals mysteries and bestows Faith that imparts the light of Reason to the human soul; and God cannot

ever contradict Himself, or truth ever contradict truth." And it continues: "An unreal semblance of such contradiction arises mainly from not understanding and setting forth the doctrines of Faith according to the mind of the Church, or from taking mistaken opinions to be dictates of Reason." It is, therefore, the authoritative teaching of the Church that there can be no contradiction between Faith and Reason, and that seeming contradiction, when it appears to exist, can come only from an inaccurate knowledge of Revealed Truth or from some error of the faculty of Reason.

Take, for instance, the case of Galileo, in the seventeenth century, which the less well-informed Protestant controversialist was accustomed to make much of as an argument against the Infallibility of the Pope. I put the bare central facts of the case: Galileo taught the Copernican theory, which we all admit today, that the earth not only revolves on its own axis once in every twenty-four hours, but also moves round the sun once every year. The theory ran counter to the received opinions of the time; it was thought by many to stand condemned by the plain language of Holy Scripture, which speaks of the rising and going down of the sun, which tells us how the sun "stood still" in the heavens at the command of Josue, and which again and again represents God as "laying the foundations of the earth." The controversy was taken over by the Holy See; the Congregation of the Index, with the Pope as its president, declared Galileo's doctrine to be false, opposed to the teaching of Scripture, not to be tolerated among Catholics; and they exacted from him a retraction of his view. We omit the details of the story, and the fables which have gathered round it. We are concerned here

with one thing only: the Roman Index, presided over by the Pope, condemned the Copernican theory as false and repugnant to Revelation; and the Roman Index was wrong. The Copernican theory has triumphed: there is no one to call its truth in question today. But was there any conflict between Faith and Reason? Was Divine Faith, was Church Infallibility, involved in the controversy? Undoubtedly the Roman Index believed they were: I have no doubt the Pope himself shared the belief. But the Roman Index is not an infallible tribunal; Papal Infallibility is a personal privilege, which the Pope has no power to communicate; he cannot even himself bring it into operation, while he acts only as president or chairman of a Roman Congregation. In Rome itself the decision was never looked on as final and irrevocable; it was never held to be an infallible interpretation of the Scriptures; no one dreamed of maintaining that it was to be assented to by an act of Divine Faith. Some theologians, some Cardinals, the Pope himself as head of a Congregation, were mistaken in the meaning which they assigned to passages of Holy Scripture; but there was no error in the Scriptures themselves; there was no exercise, and so no error of Church Infallibility; there was no conflict of Faith and Reason.

Take again the controversies aroused by Darwinism, some fifty years ago. As popularly interpreted, and as it bore upon Revealed Religion, Darwinism, or more generally, the theory of evolution, was supposed to have demonstrated two things; that man is descended from some kind of simian anthropoid ancestor, and that the existence of the universe postulates no creative act on the part of God. It was no matter that Mr. Darwin himself had abstained from all discussion of the origin

of the universe and the mental faculties in man. Popular scientists insisted that his observations and experiments, and the inferences he drew from them, had proved both points conclusively; that educated persons had no choice but to accept them; and that the teaching of the Bible and the definitions of the Church were in flagrant opposition to the ascertained and certain results of science. And there were Catholics who were intimidated by the confident tones of irreligious writers, and who really feared that a great and most dangerous crisis was approaching in the world of religious thought. The crisis, if ever there were one, has long since passed. Darwinism, as Mr. Darwin himself understood it, and as it was put forward by his earlier disciples, is almost as much out of fashion as the older theories of Lamarck, or of Lord Monboddo. No one thinks now that there was any real conflict, fifty years ago, between Faith and Reason; the Darwinists were too hurried in their construction of a theory; they drew inferences from facts, for which the facts gave no warrant; science—not true science, but a popular imitation of it—was hopelessly in error.

Now, if there can be no conflict between Faith and Reason, if Revealed Truth can never stand in opposition to any certain truth which the human intellect may discover, it becomes easy to determine what our attitude of mind should be, where conflict or opposition would seem to have arisen. We have to find out in the first place, and find out for certain, what the Revealed Truth is. It may be plain on the surface of Holy Scripture; it may be clearly expressed in the tradition of the Church; it may be set out for us in her solemn definitions. But, however it comes to us, we assent to it firmly, on the authority of God; and we know that nothing can be true

which really contradicts it. We may, indeed, examine a conflicting theory or statement; we may be curious to discover the flaw in it, and the source of error, or we may suspect that the truth has been misunderstood, or that it has been misrepresented. But we can be in no doubt that, so far as it contradicts God's Truth, it is false and foolish. I know, without further inquiry, that every physical and philosophical theory on the ultimate constitution of matter, or on the nature of substance and accidents, must be false, which cannot be reconciled with the dogmas of Transubstantiation and of the Real Presence. I know at once that every theory must be false, which would explain human life and volition by the action of mere mechanical and chemical forces. I know that every reading of history is false, which would show that a Pope or Ecumenical Council had erred in a solemn definition of Faith. And I know, generally, that nothing can be true which is at variance with the Revealed Word of God.

Furthermore, I can learn with an infallible certainty what is at variance with that Revealed Word. God has made a Revelation to me, and has given me at the same time an unerring guide, who can point out to me all the heads of doctrine which the Revelation contains, their meaning, and the necessary inferences that may be drawn from them. The Infallibility of the Church, as of a living, ever-present teacher, is the complement, the natural and gracious, though not essential, complement, of a Divine Revelation.

Now, assuming that all revealed doctrines are infallibly true, and that the Church teaches infallibly what these doctrines are, and that whatever Reason seems to urge against them, however plausible or even convincing

it may appear to be, is surely mistaken and erroneous; what are we to say of the limitations which Faith sets to the exercise of Reason, of the absolute control which it claims in the domain of human thought? Is it not an intolerable burden for us Catholics that we must keep before our eyes the doctrines of Revelation and the teachings of the Church in all our intellectual labors; that we must submit the results of our most earnest and most conscientious investigations to the arbitrament of those doctrines and teachings; and that we must accept their judgment, should our opinions be in opposition to them, not merely with external respect and submission, but even with internal and sincere assent?

How entirely fitting it is that Reason should thus pay homage to Faith, we have already seen; Infallible Truth may properly be adopted as the supreme standards of all knowledge. But it is not fitting only, it is vitally important that Reason should be guided by Infallible Authority in moral and religious inquiries, and in the study of questions bearing upon morals and religion. I do not mean that right Reason may not, or, in particular cases, does not, of itself attain to truth in matters of such high moment. But I am considering it as we see it at work in the world around us, and as we know it from the history of the past. The tendency of intellect, when most active and most highly educated, is not toward truth in religion or purity in morals. In literature, in art, in mechanical invention, in the natural sciences, in everything that makes for the well-being and enjoyment of material and sensuous life, intellect may be trusted to advance, under favoring circumstances. Not so in morals and religion. It was at the height of Roman culture and civilization that Roman morals were what Martial and

Juvenal picture to us in their epigrams and satires, and religion what Cicero describes in his works on divination and on the nature of the gods. It was at the period of her greatest intellectual development that the choicest society of Greece was what Aristophanes puts before us in his plays. It was in the days of the Renaissance, in Florence and in Rome, at the Court of Louis XIV, in Paris and Versailles, when intellectual gifts were cultivated to the utmost, and every grace and refinement enriched and adorned life, it was then that vice and irreligion appeared to triumph most openly, to be about to vanquish even the morality and the religion of Christ. And, in our own day, if we regard the modern world, and the great centers in it of intellectual life and vigor, we shall find that the highly cultivated intellect loses hold for the most part upon Christian morality and Christian Faith. Why it should be so, we need not inquire now; why a God-given faculty, such as Reason or intelligence, should fail so utterly of its main purpose, as it grows more fitted to achieve it; why it should produce such brilliant results in those things which matter least, and in the things of supreme moment, in its religious and moral theories and judgments, should not only fall short of the fulness of truth, but should prove actively hostile to it. The fact is as we have stated it: the story of civilization is a record of the solvent power of Reason, uncontrolled by Divine Faith, on the truth of natural and revealed religion, and on the natural and Christian law of individual and of public morals. It is all-important, therefore, in the interest of truth, and for the well-being of human society, that human Reason, particularly under conditions of high intellectual development and of great material prosperity, should have the guidance of Faith

in questions which affect so vitally the most momentous and most lasting issues. And hence the Vatican Council defined, what had, indeed, been ever the teaching of the schools, that: "It is to Divine Revelation we owe it that the very truths concerning God and the things of God, which human reason of itself can attain a knowledge of, may, in the present condition of the human race, be known by all, without difficulty, with a firm certitude, and without admixture of error." And hence, too, the wondrous, and yet most obvious of facts: a little Catholic child, who has been taught the great truths of Faith from the Penny Catechism, knows more about God and the fundamental principles of religion and morality than the scientist and ethical philosopher, who is groping after truth, without any help from Revelation and Divine Faith.

But it is not only where religion and morals are concerned that Faith is a most precious, indeed a most necessary, guide. Even in less important sciences, when it comes in contact with them, it may render weighty service. It may enable me to test the value of a conclusion at which I have arrived; it may enable me to judge of the process by which I arrive at it; it may even show me the folly of any attempt to reach such a conclusion at all. Many of you will remember a book which caused a considerable sensation some years ago; which described a search for the tomb and body of our Lord, undertaken through the modern enterprise of this twentieth century, and then went on to portray the consternation which fell upon the Christian world when a rumor went abroad that the mortal remains of the Christ had been discovered at Jerusalem. Let us consider, for a moment, what a Catholic's attitude of mind would be if such fanciful

incidents came to be realized in fact: the Catholic would hold as a dogma of his Faith that Christ was risen from the dead, and that, in His risen body, He is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He would know, with an absolute and immovable certitude, that Christ's place of sepulture, if discovered at Jerusalem, must be empty of the mortal remains of Christ. He views the preparations for the search, amused partly by its folly, pitying the waste of time, money, energy, which it involves. He is not interested in the accounts, published from time to time, of its progress, and of the expectations to which it gives rise; for he knows how it must end. And, when the great rumor takes definite shape and is flung out into the world, he is not disquieted; he has neither misgiving nor apprehension; he is as certain as he is of his own existence that search and searchers have gone wrong. It is not so impossible for the sun, moon and stars to fall from heaven as it is for the dead body of the Christ to be found at Jerusalem, or anywhere on earth.

And as it would be in these imagined doings of modern sensational enterprise, so should it be in every branch of earthly knowledge, in which Faith is concerned. It must be good to have an infallible test, by which we may judge with certainty the conclusions that we reach; by which we may even tell beforehand the conclusions we must or must not reach, if our conclusions are to be accurate and trustworthy. There are certain problems in mathematics and in physics which we know to be impossible of solution; it is all to our advantage we should know they are impossible; it saves wise men time and labor. In geometrical propositions you are told at the start what results you must arrive at: you are wrong, and your

process is defective, if you arrive at any other. Indeed, our studies have lain mainly, since we began to study, in availing ourselves of other men's labors; in directing our own work by the guidance they give us through their books and oral teaching; in verifying the knowledge we seem to have acquired, by comparing it with what more learned persons tell us that it should be. And it is good to have expert guidance in our work; it is good to have first-class manuals and text-books; it is good to have highly learned lecturers and professors. We do not complain that our intelligence is cramped, our reason hampered, and freedom crushed, because, even in a university, the very home of intellectual life and progress, the paths of knowledge are marked out for us, our own scientific labors are guided and controlled, the results we may achieve are proved and tested, by scientific authority. And, if the authority be Divine? Of course, we know that God has not seen fit to reveal to us much of scientific truth in the Catholic Deposit. It has not many points of contact with merely secular knowledge. Divine Revelation is concerned chiefly, almost wholly, with our souls. And so it is only rarely that Faith is called on to control the workings of Reason, or to point out the errors into which Reason has been led. But we are considering the principle itself. Is it a grievance that human Reason, which, from childhood to old age, is ever influenced and governed by the authority of men, should be expected to yield even to the authority of God? If it be a privilege, as it is a privilege, to receive aid in our search for truth from the ablest minds that have sought for it before us, how can it not be a privilege to receive aid from the infinite wisdom and truth of God? And, whether He speaks to us in the pages of Holy Scripture, or in the

traditional teaching of an Infallible Church, or in the solemn definitions of her Popes and Councils, the aid comes equally from Him. If God reveal a truth or truths of history, biology, astronomy, or any human science, and we become fully certain of the revelation, why should we not accept the truth from Him with gratitude? And what interference could there be in such a case with our legitimate freedom of thought?

But, indeed, can any rightful meaning be given to the phrase: "freedom of thought," which recurs so frequently in all discussions upon Reason and Faith? Is thought, can thought be, free? Have we any right to think, to embrace views and opinions, as we will? Thought in itself, of course, as we have already seen, is never free. Our judgments are formed compulsorily, under the evidence of manifest truth, or they are determined by the action of the will. To speak of freedom of thought, therefore, is to speak of freedom of will to think and judge as it may choose. But, is the will free, morally free, to determine thought and judgment, as it may choose? The question answers itself: the will has no more right to compel assent to what is plainly false than it has to enforce false testimony in the use of speech. We have no greater right to think what we know to be false than we have to say it, or than we have to do what we know to be wrong. And, whenever, and in whatever subject-matter, God makes a revelation to us, we know that every opinion and belief opposed to it is and must be mistaken and untrue. We have no rightful freedom, then, to hold a view, in any branch of human knowledge, which God in Divine Revelation, by His Infallible Church, condemns.

And if it be urged that, even so, Faith restrains free-

dom, imposes shackles on it, we may admit the charge. All known truth limits freedom; as do all the precepts of the moral law. You are not free to think as you please about the postulates and the conclusions of mathematical science. You are not free to hold what opinions you may prefer on the ascertained facts of history. You are not free to adopt the view of your choice in countless matters of every-day life and practice. Wheresoever truth meets you, and is recognized by you, your freedom is, so far, restricted within narrower bounds: for you may not reject what you know to be true. All education is directed toward lessening liberty of thought: only the ignorant are free to think as they will.

Reason, then, must submit to Faith, and not only in the revealed doctrines which constitute the Divine Deposit, but in every department of human knowledge, in which there is common subject matter of Divine Revelation and of natural science. And this being so, what, if any, is the proper sphere of Reason, uncontrolled by Faith?

First, Reason has a wide, indeed limitless field of activity in the profane sciences. "I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men, to be exercised in it," says the Preacher. "He hath made all things beautiful in their time, and hath delivered the world over to their disputations." It is only rarely, at few points, as we have already observed, that the spheres of Divine Revelation and natural knowledge touch one another. And nowhere else does Faith make any claim to control the energy and activity of Reason.

But, secondly—and this is the noblest privilege and duty of human Reason—it should lead the unbeliever to embrace the Faith. You cannot believe a truth on the

authority of God unless and until you know that God exists, and is worthy of belief, and has revealed the truth which you are invited to believe; and you cannot accept these preliminary judgments on God's own authority. If I am to believe firmly a statement on your testimony, I must be assured that you have made it, and that your testimony is deserving of a firm assent; and I cannot find this assurance in any testimony you may offer to yourself. Hence Reason must precede Faith; or, as Gregory XVI teaches, in the fifth of the six propositions which Louis Bautain, a Strassburg professor, was asked to subscribe toward the middle of the last century: "In these various questions—the existence of God, Christian Revelation, Resurrection of Christ, etc.—Reason precedes Faith, and should lead us to it." Some fifteen years later, and in somewhat more general terms, the same proposition was tendered to another French Catholic philosopher, Augustin Bonnetty, By Pius IX. And, finally, the Vatican Council explained and defined the teaching, when it declared that "not only Faith and Reason can never disagree, but they mutually assist each other, since right Reason demonstrates the foundations of Faith, and then, illumined by its light, cultivates the science of Divine things, while Faith frees and protects Reason from many errors, and bestows much knowledge upon it." Reason, therefore, must prove clearly for us, before we can believe firmly any doctrine of Divine Faith, that God exists, that He is infinitely wise and infinitely truthful, and that He reveals the doctrine to us.

While, however, such is the office of Reason, in the case of those who are led to the Faith in adult years, how shall we explain its action in our own case, who are born into the Faith, and can remember no time when we

deliberately doubted the truth of it as a whole, or the truth of any of its doctrines? How can it be said that Reason has led us to Faith? that we have been led, on merely rational grounds, to admit God's existence, authority, and Revelation? Of course, we must confess that our position has been very different from that of an infidel, or even of a heretic, who does not inherit, but himself acquires, the Faith; and the rôle of human Reason, uncontrolled by Divine authority, is less conscious in us, and therefore more obscure. But even in our own case, there can be no doubt that the process which led to our first act of Divine Faith was essentially the same as that of the infidel or the heretic. Even as children, we did not first believe that God was, and spoke to us, and that His testimony was true, because He Himself so testified. We believe it, because parents, relatives, companions, friends, school teachers, our priests, the Church as a great world-wide institution, because all these, or some of them, bore witness to us that it was so; and, on this purely human evidence, abundantly sufficient for us children, we conceived the judgments preliminary to Faith; and then our act of Divine Faith followed.

In every case, therefore, the believer is first guided in the act of Faith by Reason acting independently of Faith; and, in so far, the Protestant objection that we Catholics, in our analysis of Faith, are driven back ultimately upon private judgment, and not upon the authority of an infallible Church, is not an objection at all. It is, rather, a defined and admitted doctrine among us. Reason and private judgment lead us to the threshold of the Faith; thenceforward Reason and private judgment give place to authority.

We have seen then, that Faith and right Reason can

never contradict each other: for no truth can ever be opposed to the infallible testimony of God. We have seen that every doctrine is, at once and without further investigation, to be held untrue, which clashes with any portion of the Divine Deposit. That, in the domain of religion and of morals, it is vitally important Faith should control Reason, in order to maintain a proper standard of even natural virtue. That, at all the points of contact between Revelation and mere human knowledge, Faith's guidance is supremely useful to human Reason, and that a vast field remains in which Reason can exercise its power and its activity, independently of Faith, particularly in preparing the mind of the unbeliever for the acceptance of Revelation, and in guiding him to its threshold.

The Pope's Christmas Allocution

IT is only too true that a cloud of sadness darkens, this year, the happy celebration of the Nativity; and you, Lord Cardinal, expressing in the name of the Sacred College the thoughts inspired by this joyous anniversary, have not been able to suppress in your words the note of the general mourning. We are confronted today again with the savage spectacle of human slaughter; and if, last year, we deplored the extent, the ferocity, and all the results of this tremendous conflict, we must today mourn over the wider spread, the greater pertinacity, the excess, which, with their terrible consequences, have turned the world to an ossuary and a hospital, and the progress of human civilization to an anti-Christian retrogression.

All this notwithstanding, you, Lord Cardinal, raising your eyes to the higher regions of faith, have found in this festivity a motive of good wishes for Our person, of consolation for the afflicted, of hope for the future of mankind. Grateful for your homage, thankful for the noble expression of your good will, We join earnestly and with fatherly accord in the aspirations of the Sacred College toward a time to come that shall prove less fatal for the Pontiff, for the Church, for civilization. And We accept the expression of that hope all the more joyfully in that we read therein not only a comforting increase of filial affection, but also the need of more intense and urgent prayer and supplication, upraised in the midst of tumult by the whole Sacred College, keenly aware of the extremity of our common need, to Him

who alone is able to quell the tempest. These prayers, We declare to you with full sincerity, give us more comfort than any other testimony of your devotion.

And oh! how many times in the months past of Our Pontificate, months made so weary by the long delay of any sign of cessation in this human conflict, has Our heart sought refuge in prayer as in the only hope of safety! If God does not give succor, what is there that we can do? In truth there is nothing.

Called to the government of the Church in the most terrible days in all history, We fondly hoped that the love of the father might not prove altogether unfruitful for his unhappy sons. But oh! vain hope! During all the sixteen months of this effort of Our love We have seen it to be almost entirely sterile. That voice of Ours, obedient to the precept *Clama, ne cesses*, We intended should never hold its peace until it should find an echo in softened human hearts; but too often has it fallen into vacancy, a voice *clamantis in deserto*. And what of that good, of those ideals, which We loved to think We might be the means of furthering in the civil and the religious commonwealth? Far otherwise! Every wish, every hope, every project has been shattered. Indeed here also We have been compelled to confess Ourselves powerless.

Yet Our faith is all unshaken. Harkening to those Divine words whereby in like straits Our Lord Jesus Christ showed His followers that way in which now more than ever we too need to be guided, We cherish at heart, as the Apostle of the Gentiles cherished it, one great hope against all human hope. *In spem contra spem*, and in God, in God alone, do We put Our whole trust, invincibly sustained by the omnipotent promise contained in that serene reproof, *Modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti?*

He, let us be certain, will glorify His Name, saving us *ex hac hora*, even if for a time He reply as the heavens replied to the words of Jesus, with lightnings and thunder, and if for a time He repeat, *Nunc iudicium est mundi*.

This faith, alive in Our heart every day of the year, is stronger and more certain when a dear anniversary brings vividly to Our thoughts the reassuring sight of that which took place in the cave of Bethlehem. For Us it is not a vain record, an empty recollection, but a real and true renewal of the ineffable Mystery, and thus a source of hope infallible; for here is a return of that date when—even the barbaric pagan world being at peace—the King of Peace Himself came among men in the most peaceful of all forms. Oh, with what good cause may we now rehearse, even in the distraction of the present hour, the words of Pope St. Leo, *Neque enim fas est locum esse tristitiæ ubi natalis est vitæ!*

Our sight of Christ born for us is made complete, moreover, by our sight of Mary, in whom the faith of believers and the love of sons recognize not only the Mother of the Prince of Peace but the Mediatrix between rebellious man and merciful God. She is the *aurora pacis rutilans* across the darkness of this world. She fails not in her plea to her Son, albeit *nondum venerit hora ejus*. And she who has not failed to plead for suffering mankind in the hour of peril will surely hasten to meet our supplications, Mother of so many orphans, Advocate for us all in our tremendous ruin.

Therefore with this great purpose, not less than with the intention of guiding Christian thought and Christian faith to the prevailing ministry of the Mother of God, We, echoing the sigh of many of Our children far and

near, permit that to the Litany of Loretto be added the invocation "Queen of Peace." Will Mary, who is Queen not of wars and slaughter, but of the kingdom of peace, disappoint the trust and the prayers of her faithful children? Will she, in the most blessed night when, fulfilling prophecies and promises of happy and golden days, she gave us the Celestial Babe who is the author of all peace, not smile upon the prayers of children called by the Episcopate and by Ourselves to the holy Eucharistic Table to honor this most beloved festival? When man has hardened his own heart, and his hates have overrun the earth; when fire and sword are raging, and when the world rings with the sound of weeping and the noise of arms; when human reason is found at fault, and all civilized rights are scattered like thistledown, faith and history alike point us to the one succor, to the omnipotence of prayer, to the Mediatrix, to Mary. In all security and trust we cry *Regina pacis, ora pro nobis*.

It is this confidence that inspires Us in returning the message of the Sacred College and in wishing you, Lord Cardinal, and all your eminent colleagues a speedy and an ample possession of the fruits of that peace which We hope to obtain through the intercession of the Virgin. Oh, may this blessed Jesus, who at the prayer of His Mother did the first of His miracles, accept today once more the intercession of the heavenly Mediatrix, and comfort His Christian family with that abundance of graces, a pledge whereof we desire to give by this Apostolic Benediction. We here bestow it with fatherly affection upon the Sacred College, upon the Bishops and Prelates here present, and upon all, clergy and laity, who have proved to Us that dear sons are not far in heart from the father in the hour of mourning and of grief.

A Set of Shaw

BY DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.

MARGARET tossed the book which she had been reading to the floor and turned softly in her deep wicker chair. At her movement, her mother closed her book, and their hands met in the gathering dusk.

"I think," said the daughter, "that I shall have to make a decision soon."

Her mother nodded almost imperceptibly, allowing her eyes to wander through the deep bay window into the quiet street with its sedate homes and its gaunt patriarchal trees. She was a wise mother and she knew better than to stifle confidence with words. "Well, my dear?" she asked, the slightest upward inflection tempering her words.

"Jack has been on the verge of proposing, oh, at least a score of times; but I've fenced and fenced until he is perfectly savage and ready to become an out-and-out caveman. War club, you know, blow from behind, bride stunned, carried off to cave unconscious." Her voice trickled off in a somewhat hysterical laugh.

"You like him," remarked her mother, whose maternal wisdom impelled her to play the advocate for the absent suitor. "Father says he is bound to make himself felt in the firm, and the boys say that he is honorable even in the smoking-room and club. Perhaps there is something else——"

Margaret stooped again and recovered the discarded book from the floor. It was a plain, dignified volume,

bearing a publisher's mark that is supposed to indicate quality and distinction. The daughter turned the volume over and over in her hand and then remarked almost listlessly and with seeming irrelevance:

"Do you believe, Mother, that a man's view of life could be materially affected by his admiration for an author?"

"I believe," came the cautious rejoinder, "that a choice of reading, if not a cause, is at least a sign of character."

"So do I," burst out the girl, impulsively flinging the volume into the recesses of the window, "and that is just what holds me back from a positive decision. I could never marry a man in whom my confidence was not absolute; and with Jack, well I just can't decide. You see, Mother, ever since I've known Jack, he has talked Bernard Shaw's cleverness, and Bernard Shaw's philosophy, and has quoted Bernard Shaw's epigrams until I have become almost sick of the man. I remember distinctly that was one of the first subjects he introduced when I met him at Grace's dinner; 'Fanny's First Play,' he was raving about then. You and I are a bit old-fashioned in our literary tastes, no doubt; so I didn't know anything about Shaw. But since Jack gave me that set of Shaw for St. Valentine's, I've wondered if an admirer of Bernard Shaw could make a good husband.

"Mother dear," she hurried on, "I think I should die if I were to marry a man who had lost his power to reverence. I shouldn't feel safe with him one moment. We women are so weak and men are so strong, that only our powers to command their reverence and their power to give it keeps us from being slaves and them, beasts. I should always be afraid that he would strike me if I did not have his reverence, or perhaps that he would laugh

at me. A laugh, the kind that rings cold with contempt, would cut to the core of my heart and strike love dead. I don't expect to marry an archangel, Mother dear; but I want my husband to be so big and strong that he will bow reverently before the innocence of children, read purity into the weakest of womankind, and blanch with wrath when any man sneers at women. Reverence like that would lift me up to heroic womanhood, I think. I could spend a life trying to be worthy of such respect.

"But Shaw, it seems to me, has lost the power to reverence anything. Why, he says nasty things about his own father and mother! He sneers at everything; everything excites his mirth. Home, family, religion, children, mothers; nothing is sacred to him. He throws them all in sacrifice before the gallery gods. He flings his poisoned darts as a savage might do, for the pure joy of killing. And it hurts to think that Jack finds amusement in the sneers of this cultured barbarian. I am not very old or very experienced, mother; but if I did not know that the women of Bernard Shaw's plays are not typical of womankind, I should wish with all my heart that I were a man. And I should want to run away into some desert where I should be free from even the sight of such contemptible creatures. But Bernard Shaw lies, forgive the word, I know he does, when he makes his women all hard, loveless trackers of men, more interested in the capture of a husband than a hunter who stalks a rare elk. Possibly his own wife trapped him in her net: I do not know. But I should sacrifice a thousand times all thought of having a home of my own and babies who would call me mother, before I should throw away my modesty like Anna Whitefield or my womanly reserve

like Hypatia Tarlton. Their pursuit of a husband makes me sick at heart.

"Do you suppose, Mother dear, that when Jack laughed at the women of Shaw who hunt down their husbands, he thought that typical of the womanhood I am to represent in his regard? Does he fancy that I lie awake nights laying snares for his capture? It makes me shudder to think that he finds that sort of humor amusing, and I wonder—. But that is not all by any means. Shaw doesn't believe even in marriage. He says that married women are the only—the only really wicked women. His Candida doesn't see any reason why she should stay with her husband if she loves his disgusting little poet better. Oh, no; he thinks that young people should not marry at all, or if they care to marry for convention's sake, the husband should be free to leave when he chooses and the wife too, if it comes to that.

"Jack talks so much about Shaw's clever philosophy; do you suppose he accepts that too? Could I trust myself, Mother, to a man who believes that he is bound to me and I to him with bonds that the slightest whim can snap? I'm afraid; I'm really cold with fear. For even if he does not accept those conclusions, it hurts to think such philosophy does not revolt his every atom of manhood. Mother dear, you and I have always been awfully good chums, and I hope that, if God gives me a daughter, I shall love her as you have loved me. So it makes me indignant to see the disgusting way Shaw has of laughing at mothers and children. His children simply despise their mothers, and their mothers are actually jealous of their children. He laughs at maternal love; he has no faith in the love of a child for its mother. I wonder if Jack enjoys that sort of humor too? Does he really

think that if God puts a child into my arms I will not love it with the last drop of my heart's blood? Does he think that it could grow up, surrounded by love such as you have taught me to know, Mother dear, with coldness and contempt for me in its heart?

"Oh, it isn't clever to write plays in which parents and children attack one another with insulting jibes and fling chilling contempt into one another's faces. It would kill me, Mother, to forfeit your love, and it would kill you, too, I think, if I snapped my fingers at your wishes. Could Jack even smile at plays like that unless the fine edge were gone from his sense of reverence?"

"Perhaps I am too dreadfully old-fashioned to be a fair judge," replied this wise little mother; "but flippancy is so much in the air that it must be hard for Jack not to be affected by it. His enjoyment of these things may just be a sign of youthful thoughtlessness, and nothing more."

The daughter shut her eyes hard and thought silently for a moment. "I don't quite know," she said at last; "but there are moments when every person finds the laughter stricken from his lips. There are some objects so sacred that a jest about them causes not mirth but a cry of pain. I like to think that my husband will regard women and children and marriages as sacred. Can a man who has learned to laugh at women, even the most pitiable, and to smile while they are held up to contempt, ever give to any woman his whole soul's reverence? Can a man regard marriage as desperately serious, a real till-death-do-us-part contract, when he has hobnobbed with the clever scoffer who makes marriage a jest and worse? I do not know. Yet I have always dreamed that a man would come to me and, because I am a woman, would

lift me to a pedestal so that I could draw him up to my level; a man who, when his lips said 'Till death do us part,' would in the depths of his heart cry, 'Amen.' Could I hope for that from Jack?"

A long silence fell between them. The shadows in the street grew longer and broader, creeping up the fronts of the sedate homes and covering the gaunt trees in a somber sheath. At last the daughter rose and knelt beside her mother. "I think I shall stop fencing," she whispered. "I shall give Jack his chance to ask me." Another silence.

"Aren't you going to ask me what my answer will be?"

Her mother's hand passed gently over her head in silent benediction. "There is only one answer my pure, sensible daughter can give."

Christian or Pagan?

By J. HARDING FISHER, S.J.

IT was absolutely the most beautiful ceremony I have ever witnessed." And then after a pause, "Your Church certainly knows how to put on the manacles." The speaker was an eminent surgeon who assisted a while ago at the wedding of one of the younger members of his staff. He had seen the bride, one of the many autumn brides, meet the man of her choice at the entrance to the sanctuary, and go with him through the palms and flowers to the foot of the altar, and there in the presence of many priests, pledge herself to love, honor, and obey him until death. He had knelt like the others during the Nuptial Mass, and wondered to see the wife, within the sanctuary, the only time in a woman's life, when the Church invites her to come so close to the altar. He had felt the beauty of it, as she reverently, hand in hand with her husband, went up close to the holy of holies, where ordinarily only the priest may stand, twice to receive a special blessing, and once to receive the Body of her Lord. And he had been keenly alive to the poetry of it all, but what had struck him most was its grim reality. Catholics had said, "What a pretty wedding." But to him a non-Catholic, the most striking thing about the ceremony was its character of indissolubility. It was not the mere making of a contract in a bower of orange blossoms, a contract to be rescinded at will, but the forging of a religious bond, in the presence of the Lord of lords, a bond that would hold fast for

ever. There was an intangible something that seemed to give permanence to the marriage he had witnessed, which consisted although he knew it not, in the Sacrament.

No wonder he was struck by the power of the Church to unite her children in enduring wedlock. The contrast between Catholic and non-Catholic marriage grows more marked every day. Indeed marriage outside the Church is reverting more and more to the pagan type, and the term "Christian" as applied to it, is fast becoming a misnomer. All the marks that distinguish it from the pagan conception are disappearing. And yet with that disinclination to face conditions as they are, we, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, go on calling such marriages Christian marriages. They are not Christian marriages. In them there is no sacrament; they put a premium on the commission of a heinous crime, by holding out a means of getting free from an irksome bond; they are contracted under the express understanding and resolution that they shall not interfere with the social pleasures of the wife, nor fill the house with children's laughter nor God's heavenly home with pure and untainted souls. What could be further from the Christian ideal than unions such as these? Why then do we not call them by their proper names? They are pagan, pure and simple, pagan in conception, pagan in obligation, pagan in duration, pagan in their disregard of the sanctity of the home and the piteous pleading of little ones that shall never see God's sunshine. Christian marriage, is marriage according to the ideal held up by Jesus Christ. Are we not dishonoring Him by giving His name to a ceremony and a state that are in direct opposition to all He taught?